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>>> "Dirk A. Beamer" <dbeamer@WRIGHTPENNING.com> 07/31/03 12:40PM >>>

To whom it may concern:

As an attorney, a former foster parent, and an adopting parent, I urge the Supreme Court to do everything possible to expedite resolution of termination cases. As a litigator, I realize that the wheels of justice are often slow. As a parent, I can say that this is simply not acceptable when dealing with children in the most formative years of their lives.

My two sons entered our home as foster children at age 11 months. They will be five in October. We still cannot guarantee them that they will never need to leave, because the appeal on the termination of their biological mother's rights is still pending. During the appellate process, an extension was granted for forwarding the transcript; multiple extensions were, in effect, granted for the filing of the appellant's brief, and -- most recently -- an extension was granted to file the response brief on behalf of the children. I am sure that each individual decision to extend seemed warranted, but the collective result is more delay and uncertainty for my family.

As I stated above, the children have been with us for almost four years, since infancy. They have had NO contact with their biological mother in well over 1 and 1/2 years. The notion that they could in any meaningful or successful way be reunited with their biological mother under these circumstances (without even considering the serious reasons that lead to termination in the first place) is laughable. Yet, despite all of this, the children have to sit and wait. And our children are far from unique in their plight.

Frankly, the proposed rules changes are only the first step in a series of necessary overhauls. Still, any step in the right direction is welcome. Please implement the changes and continue to work to improve prompt and fair adjudication of these cases.

Sincerely,

Dirk A. Beamer

WRIGHT PENNING & BEAMER
27655 Middlebelt Road, Suite 170
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
Telephone 248/477-6300
Facsimile 248/477-7749
www.wrightpenning.com